

There is a great difference between speculation and fact, between what might be, and what is to be. People refer to many things in familiar terms when not likely or supposed likely to be realized or brought home, when they are as realized and brought home—advocated as matters of actual policy and not as mere distant contingencies—strike them as perfectly new, startling and unfamiliar.

Let us refer to two things which have certainly jarred somewhat rudely upon the public mind within the last few months or weeks, and in doing so, we are not introducing the subjects to which we refer, nor broaching any new theories, or proposing any new measures. In fact we do not design, in this article, at least, proposing any measures.

The two things to which we refer, and which have already been hinted at in some papers and gravely argued in others are—first, The arming of a certain proportion of our colored people. Second.—That in the final resort, all other things failing, it would be far preferable for us to place ourselves, with proper guarantees, under the protection of some European power or powers, than to fall into the hands of a cruel, vindictive, unprincipled and execrated foe whose treacherous troops of our people have already experienced.

It is true both of these measures, the last especially, have been proposed as mere alternatives—as measures only to be adopted in the last resort. But they have been proposed and discussed, and will be further proposed and discussed; so that we cannot pretend to ignore them, or to shut our eyes or ears to their discussion. There they are. They are startling, yet they exist. Are they as new as they appear? We appeal to the recollection of all, if it was not freely and frequently said at the beginning of this contest that it would be better to arm the negro—better to be subjects of Louis Napoleon or Queen Victoria, than after taking the stand which has been taken, again submit ourselves to the control and domination of the hated and over-bearing Yankees. Men may not have realized the full force of the expressions they then used, but nevertheless they used them. As speculative ideas, as talk, at least, the two measures referred to were far more familiar to men's minds, or to their minds, than they have ever since been or than they are now. Then, they were openly and freely talked, the men openly and freely, because it was only talk. Now, the first is seriously proposed as a practical measure, and the latter gravely advocated as an ultimate resort—perhaps only as such, perhaps only as a measure to the North, but still indignantly in either view of the case.

The proposal to arm all the able-bodied negroes is hardly valuable as a measure to the North, since it would be considered there quite as much as an evidence of exhaustion as of determination. It would come to pass, that it would be pointed to by others as "the last ditch." It is therefore only upon its own merits as a military measure that this thing must be considered. And on with the idea of seeking the protection of any European power. That must stand upon its own merits. I would be no advocate to the North. It would be regarded as an acknowledgment of defeat.

There is another aspect in which these questions or measures must be considered. Can they or either of them be proposed to the utmost and then adopted as a finality—a last resort? We think not. It is only while we are a strong military power—while we have something to give and something to withhold that we can reasonably hope to avail ourselves of the services of our negro population. It is while we have the power to reward or to punish, that we can hold out the necessary inducements and exercise the proper control. In the same way it is only as a people who have something to give as well as to get—who can assist in their own defence and add something to the strength of their allies or protectors that the tender even of ourselves and our allegiance would be acceptable to or accepted by any European nation.

We premised that we were not going, in this article, at least, to propose any measures, much less to advocate any. We have merely taken occasion to offer some considerations bearing upon certain questions, which we think it defensible that our people should bear in mind. The first consideration seems to be that the measures mentioned must be considered wholly on their own merits, and not in any way with reference to their effect at the North. The second is that although not necessary to be considered, they must, if considered at all, be considered and adopted or rejected by a people still possessing the power to give effect to any determination to which they may come. When nothing can be done, neither can they or either of them be done.

The reference to either of the measures above mentioned is unpleasant to us, but these matters have been broached by others, and we have felt it our duty to bring forward certain considerations which have occurred to us in connection with them, and which may perhaps assist our readers in coming to some intelligent conclusion as to their own course when called upon to decide, for when the time for decision does come, it must be prompt, or it will be useless.

We have heard it said that there were over twenty thousand shells thrown into Fort Fisher, and we think it quite probable. For hours they averaged over thirty a minute, as they well might from so many ships and guns. Sometimes we think they fired even faster than this.

The failure of the Yankees here seems to have been one of the most complete in the whole history of the war. They were foiled as neatly as could well be imagined, and the best of the thing is that there can be no wrangling over the honors. It was all done by North Carolina troops under their own trained leaders, for Col. Lamb, although a Virginia by birth, is the chosen Colonel of a North Carolina regiment, and Gen. Whiting has his home here, while Gen. Bragg, Gen. Hoke, Gen. Kirtland and others are native and to the manner born. Other gallant men, natives or citizens of other States were no doubt hastened to our aid, but it so happens that North Carolinians alone were at any time engaged.

We regret to hear from soldiers who have returned from Georgia, accounts in the highest degree unfavorable to Wheeler's cavalry, not simply as to discipline and military morals, but as to common morals and common honesty. They appear to have done the cause about as much harm as the enemy—perhaps more. People expected Sherman's men to rob them; they naturally looked to our own troops for protection. When they found that instead of protection they were met with insult and robbery, the effect may well be conceived.

We had heard of something like this before, and are compelled to believe at least a part of it. Our North Carolina troops, under General Baker, mostly trained under men like General Whiting, and other thorough soldiers and disciplinarians, were certainly amazed at the state of things they found in Georgia. The militia was said to be, and no doubt was, composed of good material, but ruined by want of discipline, and above all, by wholly incompetent officers. "Joe Brown's" men, his militia lieutenants, and captains, and majors, and colonels, &c., were totally unfitted for their positions. But that might have been expected. Wheel-

er's cavalry had names enough upon its rolls to have saved Georgia. It did its part to ruin it. When we hear of acts reported to have been done in that State by the enemy but by our own people—when we learn that the country people fear the enemy, when that unfortunate city was evacuated by the enemy, we are forced to become believers in the doctrine of total depravity, at least so far as very many people are concerned. The picture is a painful one and we would not dwell upon it. Nay, we would say little about General Wheeler, who is no doubt an amiable and a brave man, but we cannot shut our ears to what we hear about his command from day to day. If he can do no better with them, and nobody else can, it would seem that they had better be disbanded or have something done to restore their morale and organization.

Death of Mr. Shair.
Our community has heard with deep regret that Mr. J. B. McLean, Sheriff of New Hanover County, is no more.

At the beginning of the war, Mr. McLean promptly rallied to the call of his country, raising a company in the Seventh Regiment N. C. Troops, this being one of the ten regiments known as "State Troops" raised for the war. With this gallant regiment he served with much distinction in many of the most glorious and hard fought battles of the war, until disabled by a severe wound which deprived him of the use of one arm.

He was a good and true man as well as a gallant soldier, and was beloved and esteemed by all who knew him. Off in the morning of a life which seemed full of promise for the future, he leaves behind a young and loving wife to whom he had been united for only a few brief weeks. Her grief is sacred, but that of some other of his friends may find a more fitting expression for the general sorrow than any that we could hope to give.

We publish to-day a communication signed "Truth," the writer of which does more than simple justice to the distinguished General under whose direction our defenses were planned and executed, and who has spent years in providing for the safety of this vital point of the Confederacy. The attack of the week and its repulse have fully vindicated the wisdom of General Whiting's plans, and the efficiency with which they have been carried out; and it is with his own knowledge that the manner in which the attack was made, as well as the best mode in which it could be foisted was long since anticipated, and so far as the means at his disposal would admit, provided for by General Whiting, to whom indeed all honor is due, and to whom we feel assured it will be as warmly and truly accorded by the distinguished General, his seniors and successors in rank who were here on the occasion of the attack as it is by us, and as it ought to be by all who have marked his closely preparedness—his concentrated, confidence care for the safety of the great interests committed to his charge, and who now owe it to these preparations, to that care and foresight that their town is not in possession of the enemy—that their homes are free from invasion, that their waters still bear the flag of their chosen government.

How many there were in our midst who shook their heads unconsciously and predicted that our works could not stand three hours bombardment, and who would have it that the "thing was up" and so forth, but who now find themselves mistaken. Will they have the candor to acknowledge it now? We shall see.

Like our correspondents, we would not detract from the credit due to the superior General or subordinate officers who bore their part bravely and well in our defense, and who did not "To the beach honor, and all honor also to the able and gallant soldier who has labored on, through good report and evil report to prepare our defense—to "organize victory." And few men have been more prepared by men incapable of appreciating the fullness of his mind, or the purity of his patriotism. Some—the truly generous—who had unconsciously done Gen. Whiting injustice, have been so prompt in the reparation as to be in the injury. Some—too many—we fear, will never do themselves justice which can only come by according to him the meeds of praise which is his due.

We are not weak enough to claim that Gen. Whiting is without his faults, or that he may not have committed errors. When we find such a man we will immediately expect his spotless—his transition to another and a better world, as being no longer fit for this earthly sphere. But that General Whiting's soul and mind were and are in his work—that the defense of this place has occupied his best thoughts and claimed his best exertions—that his safety is dearer to him than any mere personal honors or advancement we most firmly believe and know.

There are no times for hostile phrases or polished eulogisms. They are the times when things must be looked at in the face, and talked of as they are.

That there must be vigilance in all movements, we freely admit, but the desire in paradoxes or unripe propensities, however enough in quiet times, may be the instrument of evil, if not of absolute ruin, in times like these. Among these desires must be checked some members of the Richmond press. The last utterance of the kind, and among the most unwise and injudicious is that made by the Richmond *Enquirer*, or reported to have been made by that paper, and spread by the telegraph through the length and breadth of the land.

The idea held forth by the *Enquirer* that we should offer to France and England the abolition of slavery as the price of their acknowledging our nationality is one of those propositions that can hardly fail to result in evil to our cause. It is true this idea or suggestion has no official character and is without executive or legislative sanction, still it appears in all the papers, although not endorsed by them, and it springs originally from a paper which once possessed an undivided influence in the State of Virginia and throughout the South, and which yet retains the prestige of former power and present ability.

It will be read by our soldiers. Our soldiers are our citizens. They are the bone and marrow, the life and strength of the Confederacy. Need we ask what its effect will be so far as it has any effect? Can we expect men to fight with the same enthusiasm when they see capitulation or something like it suggested, as they have done in the full sunlight which has heretofore enlightened their gallant, though sometimes disastrous struggle for independence?

We would be the last to willingly yield up the independence of the press to any racial distinction, but it were well if its conclusions should think less of their immunities and more of their responsibilities. The printed words of a newspaper article seem pass away, but their effects remain, and they command an authority far beyond that which would attach to any merely personal utterance of the writer.

Now, as we took occasion to say yesterday, none of the propositions brought forward, chiefly in the Richmond papers—as for arming the slaves or for seeking European protection, or again for offering to abolish slavery in the price of that protection, will bear ventilation either as measures to the North or as finally propositions to be considered at home, and in the extreme resort when nothing else can be done. These questions ought either to be acted upon at once or the discussion in regard to them ought to cease at once. When we are prepared to take them up we ought to be prepared to do them to or to let them alone. We cannot afford to play fast and loose. By doing so we do not in the least affect the Northern mind, while we certainly do great injury to the cause by distracting the Southern mind—

weakening its councils and impairing its resolution. We deprecate such discussions and dissent from such conclusions as our Richmond contemporary indulges in or has arrived at.

A GENERALISSIMO.—It would appear quite probable that General Lee will be made Generalissimo. Commander-in-Chief of the whole arm of the Confederate States, with his headquarters in the field and with the army of Northern Virginia. This will probably result eventually to the whole service, as it will interpret an idea in medium between the mutual prejudices of the President and some of the most distinguished Generals in our army. It will be for General Lee to do the difficult commands such officers as he may deem best suited to render them effective, and to make such disposition of troops as may be required by the exigencies of the Conf. defense. Of course this must be done without touching upon the constitutional power of the President as Commander-in-Chief as we believe it can be. Certainly the arrangement would be a great relief to the President, and we think would be hailed by the country at large.

This day week the enemy's fleet was hovering around our coast, and before mid-day was just had concentrated before Fort Fisher, and opened fire upon the works, which were a scene of shot and shell to which Sebastopol itself bore no parallel. To day all is still, both in town and at the Fort, and we trust that to-morrow the booming of cannon may not mingle with the voice of the warblers, nor the silent watches of the night be made hideous by the sounds of conflict.

The year closes darkly enough, but things may soon brighten. There is no ground for despair, nor as yet any excuse for the wild measures which we are urged to resort to. Hope, faith, determination are needed. With them we shall yet emerge triumphant from all the troubles that surround and beset us.

At the opening of the New Year the press will have a higher and a loftier mission before it than to cater for the gratification of mere curiosity. It will be its duty to talk earnestly and thoughtfully to the people, to strengthen the work, to confirm the wavering, to hold up the hands of our rulers and defenders. May it be indeed worthy of its high calling.

Where the fleet and the large force which accompanied it is gone is something which we think few know with any certainty, but of one thing we may be sure, and that is that we will be left to our own resources, and it will turn out, somewhere, perhaps at Charleston, perhaps at Fort Royal, perhaps here again, in connection with some co-operating force advancing by land.

Upon the whole, we think it is rather dangerous to form our opinions of men upon a mere hasty, or to allow ourselves to be guided by clamor got up, in too many cases for personal ends.

General Bragg is an honest man, it is true. He is about the best shaped man in the country, or rather he has been, for we think the cleverest among him is pretty much at an end, and yet this much abused man is a brave soldier, a pure patriot, and a gallant general, and what a gentleman of noble manners, ready to give any information calculated to allay public excitement, or direct public action. Our public men have a sufficiently hard road to travel, and the formation of opinions or beliefs against them is as unkind as it is unjust. We remember the report of some Virginia papers when Gen. Bragg was sent to this point, and when the attack came then Gen. Bragg was secured, and his conduct and bearing justified the confidence of the whole community. His dispositions were no doubt of the best character to meet any further movements of the enemy. Let us sustain our public men when we honestly can—let us give credit where credit is due. Their task under any circumstances is hard enough.

The death of General Price will be a cause of grief to many a faithful soldier in the Trans-Mississippi Department. We do not know that he could be regarded as a great general, but he was a man of good sense, good will and patriotic spirit, and the people of Missouri, and to some extent, of Arkansas were devoted to him, and he was therefore capable of doing much good for our cause—more perhaps than able men and far more skillful soldiers.

Price.—An account of the about a quarter past six o'clock last evening, was found to proceed from the residence of Mr. WILLIAM G. FOWLER, corner of Front and Ann streets. The fire appeared to be confined to the end on Ann street, near the chimney and not far from the roof. It was got under before it had spread to any other part of the building, or had done any very great amount of damage at the point where it started. We should judge that its origin was wholly accidental.

A Richmond paper enters that Harry McCarthy is in Philadelphia, having gone there from Nassau. Very likely.

A friend of ours, given to punning, says that the Yankees were "Lamb cut" at Fort Fisher.

RETURNED TO TOWN.—The Seventh Regiment H. G., under command of Col. JAMES G. DUKES, returned to town yesterday evening. They made a capital appearance, and were, no doubt, glad to get home.

Daily Journal, 30th Inst.

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE.

Editors.—The excellent community in which we live. Our parents have been so exclusively commercial, that every other interest seems to have been swallowed up in the universal whirl of business. Our people have become so water-logged, that they float along the current of life unmoved by the rippling waves which dance over its surface, reflecting the light of God's blessings which often have been graciously showered upon us—and when the storm of trouble comes, they sink in the lowest depression, instead of rising on the billows to a sense of their duties as well as their powers.

The writer of this is fully sensible of his share of the responsibility of such a state of things in our community, and therefore is desirous of calling attention to the events which have recently transpired.

Few among us appreciate fully the extent of the awful calamity which the late successful resistance of the enemy's attack on our defense has averted from us. Not only our town and State have been rescued from the power of our defeated foe, but the whole Confederacy has been saved from the severest blow which could befall it. The loss of this port and the possession by the enemy of our line of communication would have been a disaster of the first magnitude to our cause.

It becomes us, therefore, to enquire to what we are indebted, under Providence, for our recent success, and to do honor to him who anticipated and predicted the precise place and manner of the attack, and who is entitled to the credit of having devised and executed the plan for our defense. There plans have undoubtedly enabled us, with a vastly inferior force, to resist and repulse the most formidable naval expedition which has been directed against this war began, and perhaps more formidable than any which has ever been seen. A British officer who was present at the famous battle of the bastions, asserts that it is not to be compared to that of the enemy's fleet at Fort Fisher, which he also witnessed. The land attack of the defense which were executed for the preservation of this important Fort was also of the most formidable character, and most have succeeded but for the admirable manner in which the defense was conceived and executed. It is therefore certain that the honor of saving our town and country from the great calamity which has threatened us is mainly due to General Whiting. For years his energetic and brilliant mind has been devoted to the study of the plan of defense for this important position, and which we have now seen the happiness to see and feel. This can be said without detracting one jot from the merits of the gallant soldiers and officers, without whose self-sacrificing courage and efforts our works would have been of no avail.

Least of all is it my purpose to disparage the services of the distinguished General who was present and of higher rank than Gen. Whiting. Purer patriots and braver gentlemen are not to be found in this or any country, and they both deserve far more honor from our good old State—the mother of them both—than has been accorded to them, but I have reason to believe that they both concur fully in the opinions above expressed as to our defense, and that

neither of them would obscure or divert one ray of that brilliant light of honor which the defeat of the plans of the enemy reflects and ennobles for him to whom the honor is due.

TRUTH.

The Yankee Congress—A "Copperhead" Discussion.
The Judiciary Committee of the Yankee House has under consideration a bill for the reconstruction of civil government in the "rebellious" States, drawn up by Mr. Y. of Kentucky. It requires that the government shall be Republican in form and "compatible with the Union and Constitution," and leaves the effect and validity of acts of Congress and Lincoln's proclamations "to the judgment of the courts." In the House, on Wednesday, a discussion took place in which the very question was introduced.

Mr. Brooks (New York) in addressing the committee, said there was in the message two starting points: first, that the war must go on without attempting any negotiations; and the second, that it must be prosecuted until slavery was universally abolished. As slavery seemed to be the great stumbling block in the way of peace, he asked why it should be so under a form of government like ours, which was created to tolerate the widest difference of opinion in matters far more important than slavery—namely, religion. He would advise and beseech the House not to be too intolerant on the subject of slavery. He warned them not to enter into any civil war in the spirit of intolerance. The Saviour of the world was not tolerant on that subject, and why should we not be tolerant on the essential principles of the Constitution? He would advise and beseech the House not to believe in the Saviour, and we exhibit the extraordinary speech of tolerating polygamy, which is prohibited in the New but not in the Old Testament. There is rising among us a Mormon State of now some 125,000 persons—while tolerating this we are up to the neck in slavery which the Old Testament especially sanctions and the New Testament permits.

Even to conquer Greece were left her Archons, Ephors, etc., with many other confederations than the polytheistic. Antiquity, not homogeneity, was the guarantee of the homogeneity the people who had in power can be had only after the subjugation of the South. There are two errors ever prevalent with the Administration: first, that an earnest civil war like ours would be short; second, that the conquest of the South by an equal race, over such a vast territory, would be a long and tedious process. Mr. Trevelyan, a member of the House, said that the conquest of the South would be a long and tedious process. The conquest of the South would be a long and tedious process. The conquest of the South would be a long and tedious process.

Mr. Wilson (Connecticut) asked: Suppose the Government adopted a plan for ending the war, and it failed, would the gentleman from New York then be ready to urge the war on if the result should be, that we could acknowledge the independence of the South?

Mr. Brooks replied: If all means should fail, would the gentleman wage war for the suppression of the rebellion?

Mr. Brooks replied: "God made this country for one people; but was not the civilized remedy for the diseases. Our first duty is to try conciliation. If that fails, we must resort to force. The British Parliament from 1774 to 1787, by Chatham, Burke, Fox and others, to show that these great men were for compromise and honorable concessions, and that what they begged to be given at the start, Lord North had to give in the end, while in the end we were to the North. We are a Christian people, and we are to be guided by the principles of the Bible. History will be against itself. If we attempt negotiation, and the South refuse to hear, the South will be divided and the North united. The war will be by the ballot-box. The Southern country. Our remedy is not the sword and the bayonet. This is a Christian people, and we are to be guided by the principles of the Bible. History will be against itself. 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